



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

EXHIBIT 1  
DATE 2/10/11  
HB 390

**Testimony in Support of H.B. 390  
Presented to the House Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee  
February 10, 2011  
By Wendy Hergenraeder, Montana State Director  
The Humane Society of the United States**

I am submitting testimony as a proponent for HB 390 for The Humane Society of the United States on behalf of its more than 36,000 supporters in Montana. HB 390 would require facilities that sell dogs or breed dogs to register with the Montana Department of Livestock and be subject to inspection by the state veterinarian at least once every two years. This bill would also require the Montana Department of Livestock to adopt rules to establish welfare standards for these facilities.

Current laws are ineffective to deal with large scale commercial breeding facilities. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture licenses and inspects facilities that sell puppies wholesale to pet stores, the USDA's own Office of Inspector General recently released a report confirming that USDA inspectors regularly ignore horrific suffering at commercial dog breeding facilities and allow the facilities to continue to operate, unimpeded, despite repeated violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

Commercial breeders who sell dogs directly to the public rather than to pet stores, through classified ads and over the internet, are exempt from USDA licensing. While most states in the country license and regulate commercial breeders, in Montana, commercial breeders and facilities that sell dogs directly to consumers operate entirely free of state oversight. With passage of legislation in other states across the country, Montana could fast become a magnet for some of the worst operators who will choose to move to a less restrictive state if we don't take action.

At the worst commercial breeding facilities, focused solely on making a profit, dogs are kept in crowded, filthy conditions where they receive little or no socialization, veterinary care or exercise.

Regular inspections and implementation of defined standards of care would not only lead to more humane treatment of the breeding dogs themselves, it would also protect consumers. We receive complaints from families who unknowingly purchased a dog with severe health or genetic problems that lead to extreme financial and emotional expense associated with extensive veterinary bills and the heartbreak of watching their dog suffer.

When conditions are allowed to deteriorate at puppy producing facilities and facilities that sell dogs, the cost of cleaning up these operations can be crippling to local agencies. We saw this in 2008 in Yellowstone County where almost 200 dogs were removed from a facility in Ballantine and ended up costing the county in excess of \$250,000. Regular inspections and implementation of defined standards of care would help protect localities from the financial burdens by ensuring facilities are taking adequate care of their dogs. I urge you to support HB 390.